

Message Text

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 08321 261636Z

53

ACTION SS-30

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S E C R E T TEHRAN 8321

EXDIS

NEA PASS AMBASSADOR HELMS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, IR

SUBJECT: USS HANCOCK TASK FORCE

REF: STATE 231141

1. WE WISH TO SUGGEST MODIFICATIONS IN APPROACH TO GOI RE
IRAN'S CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR HANCOCK TASK FORCE (REFTEL).
AS WE SEE IT, WE HAVE TWO ALTERNATIVES. WE CAN MAKE BARE-
BONES REQUEST FOR THIS OPEN-ENDED FAVOR AS OUTLINED REFTEL.
WE BELIEVE GOI WOULD ACQUIESCE, BUT THAT TACTIC WOULD CONTRI-
BUTE LITTLE TO OUR OVERALL RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAN
EXCEPT ADD AN OBLIGATION ON OUR SIDE FOR SERVICES RENDERED
BY GOI.

2. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE FAR PREFERABLE TO ENHANCE IRANIAN
COMPREHENSION OF, AND THEREBY DEVELOP MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS
IN, HANCOCK OPERATIONS. INVITATIONS TO IRANIANS FOR P-3
FAMILIARIZATION FLIGHTS, VISITS TO CARRIER AND JOINT SHIP
EXERCISES, HOWEVER COSMETIC THEY MIGHT SEEM, WERE STEPS
IN THIS DIRECTION. MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE THINK WE SHOULD
TAKE SHAH INTO OUR CONFIDENCE TO EXTENT POSSIBLE CONCERNING
SECRET

PAGE 02 TEHRAN 08321 261636Z

OUR PLANNING FOR HANCOCK OPERATIONS. ALL WE HAVE GIVEN GOI
SO FAR IS THE RATHER THIN EXPLANATION IN STATE 217485 FOR
HANCOCK'S PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN. AS FAR AS IRANIANS
KNOW FROM US, HANCOCK IS TO BE STATIONED AT HOLDING AREA POINT

180 MILES SE OF MUSCAT IN NORTHERN ARABIAN SEA. WE NOTE FROM JCS 200219Z THAT TASK FORCE HAS MOVED AT LEAST TEMPORARILY TO AREA OF GULF OF ADEN. WE OWE IT TO GOI, IT SEEMS TO US, TO INFORM THEM ON HANCOCK ACTIVITIES WHICH MIGHT ATTRACT PUBLIC ATTENTION. PERHAPS WE ARE SEEING GHOSTS, BUT THERE IS LITTLE REASSURANCE IN THE SKELETAL INFORMATION WE HAVE SO FAR SEEN OR PASSED TO GOI.

3. WE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE, IN MAKING APPROACH TO GOI FOR INDEFINITE EXTENSION OF HANCOCK SUPPORT, TO TELL SHAH:

A. HOW LONG WE ANTICIPATE HANCOCK WILL REQUIRE SUPPORT. IF WE DO NOT KNOW, THEN WE SHOULD MENTION FACTORS WHICH WILL AFFECT DURATION OF HANCOCK'S STAY.

B. WHAT MOVEMENTS AND OPERATIONS ARE PLANNED FOR HANCOCK.

C. ANY CHANGES IN REQUIREMENTS FOR IRANIAN FUEL OR USE OF BANDAR ABBAS AIRFIELD FROM SCHEDULES WE ORIGINALLY PUT TO GOI. WE NOTE THERE HAVE BEEN NO C-141/130 FLIGHTS AND INFREQUENT COD FLIGHTS.

D. WHETHER IT IS LIKELY WE WILL BE MAKING OTHER REQUESTS OF GOI RE TASK FORCE OPERATIONS, EMG. PORT VISIT.

4. WHILE ISSUE OF SALE OF IRANIAN POL GTO USG FOR PACIFIC OPERATIONS IS SEPARATE SUBJECT (TEHRAN 8064) WE BELIEVE IF FEASIBLE IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO TAKE UP BOTH THAT ISSUE AND HANCOCK SUPPORT EXTENSION AT SAME TIME. UNLESS WASHINGTON DECISION ON APPROACH TO GOI FOR PACIFIC SUPPLY WILL BE DELAYED FOR MORE THAN TEN DAYS, WE WOULD LIKE TO HOLD HANCOCK SUPPORT QUESTION IN SUSPENSE UNTIL WE HAVE BOTH REQUESTS IN HAND. THIS SHOULD NOT AFFECT ONGOING HANCOCK SUPPORT OPERATIONS. HECK

SECRET

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